EXPULSION.

BY D. A. LICHTY.

This is the caption of a bold editorial "feeler" in No. 47, *Messenger*. I will quote the article entire by paragraphs; followed by such remarks as the conclusions may suggest:

"We (H. H. Brumbaugh) are always made glad to hear of accessions being made to the church; but when we receive reports of members being expelled, our hearts (An editor may be plural in number, but who ever heard of an editor having plurality of hearts? It cannot mean the church collectively, because no rational being would lacerate his heart for pure enjoyment, we take it for granted he meant his editorial heart, for which he has our sympathy.)—our hearts are made sad, and we fear that there may have been a wrong with the church as well as with the expelled."

How does this conclusion apply to Holsinger's case, and Bashor's and Worst's and Beer's? On which side falls the wrong?

"The church relation is compared to the family relation, which is the closest and dearest that exists outside of religion. Father, mother, brother, sister and children—what sweet and precious words are these, and how sacred the tie that binds them together."

The relation which should exist in the household of faith is paramount to the ties of consanguinity.

"And in the church we have them all. How seldom do father and mother expel the son or the daughter from the home—drive them out and close the door against them!"

This is quite natural, and shows conclusively that if they had the same love and attachment to the children of God as they manifest to their own children, then *their* hearts would be touched and saddened in sympathy with *yours* in the contemplation of the reckless, illegal, unscriptural, wholesale expulsions, which in the last two or three years has been a most salient characteristic of the church you alluded to.

"How terrible must be the crime, before the father, mother, brothers and sisters will say, Go!"

How would the first installment of Pony Creek's expulsion fit this shoe. Twenty-five at one fell swoop were expelled on a motion by a rising vote, simply because they fellowshiped and affiliated with W. J. H. Bauman—said to be an expelled member.

"Accepting the truth that the same relation exists in the church, what must the violation be for the fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, to say to the wayward one, "Go!" Go where—you say? If expulsion means anything, it means out of the church; away from our spiritual home, away from God."

This is precisely the way we look at it. Are *you* prepared to say what it means? You say, "if expulsion means anything it means away from God", &c. In all candor and honesty, will you please tell whether the condition of the preceding cases means "away from God?" If it does not mean that, then what does it mean, "if it means anything?"

"O beware, dear brethren and sisters, how you use this power. Nothing but a clear violation of plain gospel truth is sufficient cause for expulsion, and this cause would seldom happen if the church relation were made ever equal to the family relation."

Suppose no moral principle nor gospel truth were violated, and the expulsion is effected notwithstanding, then what? Does this mean "away from God?" or does it mean anything at all? When brother Bauman was on trial he asked the privelege to use the *Gospel* in connection with annual meeting minutes in the disposition of his case, to which the moderator S. S. MOHLER objected as being "out of order." No gospel violation here alleged. He was, however, charged with withdrawing from the church, which he most emphatically denied; but he requested to be relieved of annual meeting rule. Then the moderator, Unick Eby (presiding elder the last time) stated that the vote would be taken on his *request*—and as his request was as aforesaid, some twenty-one voted that he (brother Bauman) should be released from annual meeting rule, while some eighteen declared he should not have his request granted. Of course the minority looked upon this expulsion as not "meaning anything," and they fellowshipped him as before for which cause twenty-five more were expelled and of twenty-five or more it is said "they expelled themselves" and about forty converts joined this expelled congregation, which numbers about one hundred members. Now can it be, that this one hundred poor deluded castaways are laboring in vain, that the door of grace is locked and barricaded to them because—; well I will forbear further comment.

CONCLUSION.

Many of our spiritual children are miserably cared for. As a result, love dies, disobedience (to what?) follows, and expulsion is the end, and who is to blame? Annual meeting, I guess.

TO AN AGNOSTIC.

BY C. H. BALSBAUGH.

"God is an imaginary creation, and his supposed Christ ditto." Let us see. Matter is, we are. Whence? You reply, the origin of things is unknowable. How do you *know* what you do *not* know? There was a beginning or there was not. What have infidel scientists found in matter as its leading characteristic? A persistent something which can be properly appellated by but one term—*intelligence*. Is this an inherent constituent of matter? The boldest infidel has never been bold enough to venture such an avowal. They claim thought, emotion, imagination, faith, 'conscience,' volition, as the ultimate product of matter, but not as intrinsically of it. Whence then the undeniable tokens of Mind in every atom the scientist subjects to his analytical tests? You fall back upon your agnostic stolidity and inconstancy, and say, "we do not know." But this does not alter the fact. Mind is manifest in nature, as the reason of its existence and arrangement, and is not inherent, it is extraneous and independent, omnipotent and eternal. In all her details nature confesses an Author, an intelligent Will. You pronounce the Bible a book of unintelligible mysticisms. Have you and your agnostic compeers looked to the bottom of nature? Even the erudite Tyndall has more play for his "scientific imagination" than for his reason. The best of you acknowledge that your widest attainments are only as a drop to the unattained. If mind is the highest outcome of matter, as you allege, and the Bible the highest outcome of mind, why should you expect less difficulty in the product of mind than of matter? This would be evolution backward. As Mind only can interpret matter, so mind only can originate it. Whose mind? Necessarily One who is both Omnicient and omnipotent. Nature has either these two properties essentially, or they belong to one to whom nature owes her birth. This is the God of the Bible. He has verified Himself as emphatically in matter as in the revelation you repudiate. You cannot lay bare the mysteries of the tiniest seed without reaching a something, a power, an occult worker, for which science has no name, but which the Bible unhesitatingly denominates God. Christ calmly asserts that the Divine, Eternal Father makes the sun to shine and the rain to fall. How much that renowned scientist, Tyndall, has written about light and water, verifying the declaration of Christ in a thousand ways, and yet all the time persisting in his foolish agnosticism that we cannot tell whether there is a God! I could persuade neither him nor you that the ink and pen with which he writes his beautiful and thrilling discoveries, and his absurd, self-stultifying conclusions, are shaped into their form and combination by forces minus intelligence and will.

And what about Jesus Christ? He is a pure myth, or a huge caricature. So you affirm. What says history? This you cannot sneer out of existence. "These things are not done in a corner." All history is composite. No nation or event is isolated. Palestine is blended with Rome. Is Cæsar a myth, and Pontius Pilate, and Tacitus, and Nero, and Trajan? Are all these men mere bubbles of the fancy? How do you know they are realities? By that universal memory called history. Does not this include Christ of the Gospels? Blot out him just as he is there portrayed, and you must blot out all the others, unless you conclude to proclaim yourself either a fool or a rogue. The New Testament is so inwoven with the general history of the world, that Christ as a verity stands as secure in the confidence of the intelligent and honest, as any other great public personage of the past. Not only is his historical being beyond cavil, but the simple acceptance of this fact also demonstrates his astounding claims. Just as certain as he was here, He asserted Himself as divine—God manifest in the flesh. And the claim he verified by displaying his Lordship over nature, and all her derangements caused by sin, both in the physical and mental and moral domains. This is also history. God is, Christ is His Incarnation, and only fools gainsay this.

Youth looks forward with pleasant anticipations; but age often looks back upon bitter disappointments, with profound regrets.

If you would die the death of the righteous, see to it that you live a virtuous, righteous life.

If the fool does say in his heart "there is no God," God does not say "there is no fool."

They are prone to annoy a teacher who is easily annoyed.

"AND I SAW THE HEAVENS OPENED."—Acts 7:56.

BY GEORGE W. NEFF.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has opened heaven to our souls. Believing the great truths which come to us through the opened heavens, we are enabled to look into the future and looking, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Our souls are ever craving peace and joy, for these are the blessings which sustain us, while on our pilgrimage through this world; but this peace and joy can only be had by looking through the gospel into the the heavens that it has opened unto us. Those who make the journey of life with their eyes cast down upon imaginary doings, will make life dark, instead of bright and joyful; but if as we journey through, we keep an upward look—looking into the heavens through the Gospel, then, under all the troubles and trials of life we shall have peace and joy. Looking into the open heavens, we are enabled to see the glorious Son of Righteousness, and the beautiful stars of promise, hear the songs of the angels and harps of the redeemed. Close the Gospel, and this world indeed would be dark; but with the heavens open, and looking through them, we make life bright. What we behold there makes amends for all we suffer here.

The Gospel opens to our vision of faith the beauty and glory of heaven; first to the mind, the truths of heaven; then to the soul, the peace and joy of heaven; and to the vision of the beauty of heaven, for the Gospel opens heaven to our vision of faith, as a place, and also as a state or condition of the soul. And in both respects it is all that can be desired. It is true, the opening is only partial: "we see through a glass darkly"; nevertheless we see, and when we have seen all that the eye of faith can take in, we are then authorized to let the imagination go to work and fill up the picture. And when imagination has done its best, and gone as far as thought can reach, the gospel opening gives assurance that beyond all this, there still "remains a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Looking into the gospel heaven, we see no limit to the good which God has in reserve for his children. And we are authorized to look upon the beautiful things of this world, as types and shadows of better and more beautiful things to come. Every thing beautiful this side the River, I am inclined to think is typical, of something more beautiful lying beyond. Revelation justifies this. Our wide, beautiful valleys, landscapes, fountains of waters, are only shadows of more beautiful things, where shines one eternal day, surpassing in beauty all that nature has ever presented or pencil ever painted. And of fountains of water that run forever, of streams that make glad the city of God; of a pure and peaceful wave that issues from and rolls round and round the throne of God.

The fragrance of Spring, and growth of Summer; the rich harvest, and the white robed Winter, are but types of better beyond. The golden beams of our noontide sun; the rays of night's gentle Queen, and the starry firmament of evening, with all their beauty and glory, are only shadows of things to come; shadows of the beauty and glory of that world that needs no sun, moon nor stars; that world in which there is a glory above that of the sun's golden beams, a brightness superior to the moon's, that is ever visible through all the brightness and glory of that "one eternal day." In this world it takes the darkness of night to bring to view the beauty of the heavens; but in that world, of which this is but typical, "beauty never fades."

It may be said that this is but imagination let loose, to draw beautiful pictures of what would be desirable in the future world. Well, suppose it is imaginary, it still falls short of the reality. It is all in the direction of goodness, purity and love, and in this direction the imagination of the finite cannot reach beyond the power of the infinite. Our fruitful imagination is the gift of God; and it was given to be exercised, given that we might look at the beautiful things of this world, and from them rise to and picture out more beautiful things in the world to come. And the opened heavens justifies the imagination in drawing such pictures, for, looking through them, we see God whose nature is love, and who is able, in the direction of goodness to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think; and, consequently, can and will work out for his children realities beyond all that the imagination can possibly picture.

Looking through the heavens, opened by the gospel, we realize the joy of faith; a joy unspeakable and full of glory; we gather the assurance that we are not alone in the world; that we are not the mere creatures of a day; the offspring of chance, the sport of a few fleeting hours; but that God is our Father. And now, as the heavens have been opened, we can look up and looking up we can learn what we are, and what to do and how to do it.

Archie, Mo.

PARTYISM.

BY J. H. WORST.

Partyism implies narrowness of thought, politically, theologically or philosophically. But few men are constituted broad enough to rise above unfettered limits. Party spirit is binding and enslaving. In politics it will down the grandest statesmen of the country to make place for incompetent libertines; in theology it will crush and ostracise the man that defends a truth outside the creed of its own peculiar school, and in philosophy it will damn the hero of a new principle. The slow progress made in civilization and thought is due the persistent opposition of the great majority that never originated a new idea nor successfully applied an old one. The great majority never move only as the martyred few, acting as a lever, actually lift them by mechanical force.

Sects, parties, denominations. What are they? Bodies of people, large or small, that cling fanatically to a code of principles that they do not understand and cannot explain. There are those among them that can, but the mass cannot, and they are the firmer in their convictions, if they have any, because they cannot. They consult their leaders as a school boy consults a dictionary for the definition of a word, and like the school boy, accept the definition without knowing why or wherefore. Party spirit is the more degrading because it does not encourage research and investigation, that its membership may enter through the temple of intelligent volition, but rather condemns it, that they may enter through the sepulchre of departed friends. There is no use in denying the active superstition that fills and retards the growth of the world. Few men are sufficiently unhampered to become national in thought and feeling. The Senator from Ohio generally overlooks the special interests of forty millions that do not live in Ohio, in his zeal to serve his constituents faithfully. It is but natural, but is it the true end of statesmanship? So of all other Senators for that matter. So, but few men are broad enough to be Christians. To serve the church rather than to serve God, seems to be the chief end of thousands, even though they have neglected to master her tenets. It matters not to them whether or not the grandest principles embodied in the Christian economy suffer in some other denomination, so it does not in theirs. If [illegible] fragments of Christianity embodied in [illegible] creed are faithfully kept [illegible] but [illegible] it makes no [illegible] more sacred [illegible] their own affi[illegible] nominationalism as a whole. W[illegible] party prejudice [illegible] the slave does his [illegible] Who can defy creed, customs and usages, or [illegible] just value, and rise up into [illegible] God's only message and recei[illegible] only it into his heart? When [illegible] and not till then, is he free from [illegible] spiritual vassilage, if not from persec[illegible] ostracism.

Partyism is a tyrant, a flagrant c[illegible] leach that saps the best powers of huma[illegible] tion and weakens and often paralyzes the blest impulses of the soul. It is a crying ev[illegible] and to banish it is philanthropic. Can it [illegible] done? Can men and women be taught independence and encouraged to investigate and accept the truth, come from what source it may? Until this is practically accomplished the feelings and prejudices will rule and shape the life, and truth will only enter as an adulterated compound.

"The Gospel, the whole Gospel and nothing but the Gospel." What more befitting motto for absolute independence of sordid influences and what more crushing weapon for the annihilation of mere human whims? What universality and depth and at the same time what oneness! It is a matchless sentiment grounded upon the imperishable. It takes the sceptre out of human hands and makes God the only arbiter, judge, and potentate. It annihilates every human creed by eliminating the chaff of human addition and adding the eliminated germs by human subtraction, making it no longer a party creed but the "will of God in Christ Jesus." Upon this platform man must come to be free. Here only can all the elements of spiritual education be found, and here is the basis for complete Christian oneness.

Williamsport, Dakota.

God did not take up the three Hebrews out of the furnace of fire; but he came down and walked with them in it. He did not remove Daniel from the den of lions; he sent his angel to close the mouths of the beasts. He did not answer the prayer of Paul to remove the thorn in the flesh; but he gave him a sufficiency of grace to sustain him.